

2014 Early Childhood Educator Preparation Program Innovation Grant Recipients Proposal Summaries

Below are the awardees of the 2014 ECE Teacher Preparation Program Innovation grants, with their partner institutions and a summary of their proposed work. Grants were awarded in February 2014 and will end in December 2014.

Purpose:

The purpose of the grants to four-year teacher preparation programs is to improve the preparation and ongoing professional development of early childhood educators through innovative partnerships with two-year institutions, while focusing on key areas for enhancement, such as early math, infant/toddler development, English language learners, and flexible pathways to degree attainment.

Entities Who Worked Together to Develop the Grant:

Coordinating Body: Illinois Board of Higher Education

Other Entities Involved: Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois State Board of Education, IRC:EC/The Center, Higher Education Learning and Professional Development (HELP) Work Group

Four-Year Partner	Two-Year Partner(s)	Grant Award
Chicago State University	City Colleges of Chicago – Olive-Harvey College South Suburban College	\$45,000
DePaul University	Morton College Prairie State College	\$45,000
Roosevelt University	City Colleges of Chicago - Harold Washington College Harper College	\$45,000
St. Xavier University	Moraine Valley Community College City Colleges of Chicago - Daley College	\$45,000

The Chicago-Area Early Childhood Redesign Consortium (CAECRC) is a regional partnership including Chicago State University, DePaul University, Roosevelt University, and St. Xavier University and eight community colleges. To address the need for a more diverse early childhood education (ECE) teaching force and to remove barriers to transfer among institutions and programs, CAECRC has proposed a regional, collaborative approach. Together, all partner institutions will: (1) redesign ECE programs to align with relevant professional and early learning standards, including the Gateways Standards for ECE and Infant-Toddler credentials; (2) design key assignments and field experiences to address areas such as English language learning, working with children with special needs, and caring for infants and toddlers, and; (3) create standards-based assessments aligned with the edTPA assessment required for ISBE licensure. Consortia members will study the systems and supports for recruiting, advising, and supporting ECE majors in their respective institutions and, as partnership program changes are instituted, provide ongoing training for transfer specialists and other academic advisors. Consortium members will institute formal partnership agreements and related meetings and communications to ensure continuity of work after the grant period.

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Eastern Illinois University	Parkland College Danville Area Community College Three additional partners to be added	\$39,500
<p>Faculty from partner institutions will focus on the redesign of ECE programs to align with relevant professional and early learning standards. Emphasis will be placed on the development of flexible pathways for ECE majors to complete a four-year degree through exploration of various delivery models including online coursework, coursework delivered to cohorts on community college campuses, and evening/weekend scheduling. In addition, grant partners will work collaboratively with representatives from area school districts, preschools, and community childcare centers to discuss opportunities to enhance ECE field experiences. As program initiatives are launched, a website with information and resource for early childhood educators will be developed.</p>		

Four-Year Partner	Two-Year Partner(s)	Grant Award
Governors State University	Prairie State College South Suburban College	\$47,000
<p>Governors State University and the partner institutions have existing articulation agreements which will be updated to reflect new requirements in early childhood educator preparation. Through the grant period, faculty from all partner institutions will complete a gap analysis of existing early childhood education (ECE) courses as these relate to new Illinois standards for teacher and student learning. Faculty, along with invited partners and alumni from area school districts, preschools, and childcare centers, will participate in an alignment retreat in Spring 2014. Through this retreat and other meetings, faculty will revise a series of aligned syllabi which will create seamless transfer of coursework into a BA in Early Childhood Education with two tracks, one leading to ISBE licensure and a non-licensure route. Faculty will also discuss course activities and standards-aligned assessments with the goal of creating measures of candidate proficiency specific to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards that are sequenced across lower and upper division courses and, the results of which, will be communicated among the partners.</p>		

Four-Year Partner	Two-Year Partner(s)	Grant Award
Illinois State University	Heartland Community College Illinois Valley Community College Illinois Central College	\$48,000
<p>Illinois State University (ISU) and Heartland Community College have an articulation agreement in place that supports the direct transfer of five courses in ECE. Building on this work, the partner institutions will continue to redesign and align curriculum in light of new Illinois standards for teacher and student learning. The curriculum redesign process will include options for candidates to acquire the English as a Second Language endorsement and a special education letter of approval courses. Illinois State University will also seek Gateways Level 5 recognition for its redesigned program. In addition, a bridge program – the Early Childhood Professional Preparation Partnership (ECP3) – will be developed. ECP3 will allow candidates currently working in early childhood settings to complete an ISU degree and licensure requirements through coursework delivered on evenings and weekends on the Heartland campus. Participants in ECP3 will be provided access to TAP and ACT preparation classes and related supports for candidates to pass these entrance exam requirements. Grant deliverables include the expansion of articulation agreements and related activities with Illinois Valley Community College and Illinois Central College.</p>		

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Four-Year Partner	Two-Year Partner(s)	Grant Award
National Louis University	Triton College	\$48,000
<p>National Louis University (NLU) in partnership with Triton College (TC) will create “Pathways for Excellence in Early Childhood Education” to support Triton College students in completing a BA in Early Childhood Education with an English as a Second Language endorsement. Qualified candidates may also be eligible for the Bilingual Education endorsement. Grant activities include: (1) supporting prospective ECE candidates to pass the ACT-plus writing exam through intensive support on the Triton College campus; (2) a 2014 “Pathways to Success in Early Childhood Education” Summer Institute hosted jointly by NLU and TC faculty to launch candidates in the BA program; (3) plans to offer the junior and senior year coursework on the Triton College campus, jointly taught by TC and NLU faculty, and; (4) ongoing co-planning and co-teaching initiatives between NLU and TC faculty.</p>		

Four-Year Partner	Two-Year Partner(s)	Grant Award
St. Ambrose University	Black Hawk College	\$47,000
<p>St. Ambrose University and Black Hawk College will focus their efforts on improving preservice and early childhood educators’ abilities to support the early math learning of preschool children from disadvantaged environments. Grant activities include developing supports to improve a cooperating teacher’s ability to provide high-quality field site/practicum placements and creating micro-teach learning modules to improve ECE students’ abilities to plan, implement, and reflect on math lessons they implement in their practicum sites. Faculty from the partner institutions will jointly plan and carry out the following grant deliverables: (1) a series of professional development opportunities for EC educators at designated partnership sites, addressing early math learning, math methods instruction, and strategies for effectively mentoring novice educators; (2) creation of resource libraries on early math learning for ongoing use by cooperating teachers at ECE partner sites; (3) development of a series of exemplar videos and micro-teach lesson materials to support preservice ECE students’ learning about early math instruction and adaptations for dual language learners and children with special needs, and; (4) alignment of math field experiences across programs.</p>		

Four-Year Partner	Two-Year Partner(s)	Grant Award
University of Illinois, Chicago	City Colleges of Chicago – Harold Washington College City Colleges of Chicago – Malcolm X College City Colleges of Chicago – Truman College	\$45,500
<p>The University of Illinois, Chicago launched a new BA in Human Development and Learning (HDL) that will allow students opportunities to specialize, through program electives, in ECE. Grant activities include the development of articulation agreements between all partner institutions, facilitating seamless transfer of students. A comprehensive, pathways approach is envisioned, wherein candidates can enter the program at multiple points beginning with introductory coursework at a community college. Multiple exit points with related credentials will also be established including Gateways Infant/Toddler, Gateways Level 5, a BA in HDL, and the M.Ed. Grant partners will work collaboratively to identify and organize existing student information and support networks. Various forms of student supports will be leveraged in conjunction with the planned academic programs, and information will be disseminated jointly by partner institutions.</p>		

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Western Illinois University	Illinois Valley Community College Illinois Central College Carl Sandburg College Black Hawk College John Wood Community College Sauk Valley Community College Spoon River College	\$45,000
Partners in this grant initiative have all agreed to seek and secure the appropriate Gateways Entitlements – i.e., Gateways Levels 2, 3, and 4 at the Associate’s level and Gateways Level 5 at the Bachelor’s level. Articulation agreements will be developed and implemented among all partner institutions with an emphasis on curriculum alignment efforts to create “stackable” and portable courses. Faculty at partner institutions will share, discuss, and jointly revise course syllabi. Methods for collecting and sharing commonly agreed upon assessment data pertaining to candidate performance will also be addressed. Grant activities include the development of regular meetings and communications to facilitate alignment and articulation agreements. Partners will continue these meetings after the grant period ends to ensure ongoing review and improvement of the articulation systems.		